

A Companion to Francisco Suárez

Edited by

Victor M. Salas
Robert L. Fastiggi



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Cover illustration: Rome, view of the Collegio Romano and St. Ignatius Church, by Giuseppe Vasi. Courtesy of the Museo Galileo - Institute and Museum of the History of Science, Florence, Italy.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to Francisco Suárez / edited by Victor M. Salas, Robert L. Fastiggi.

pages cm. -- (Brill's companions to the Christian tradition, ISSN 1871-6377 ; VOLUME 53)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-28158-5 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Suárez, Francisco, 1548-1617. I. Salas, Victor M., editor.

B785.S824C66 2014

196'1--dc23

2014035815

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual 'Brill' typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1871-6377

ISBN 978-90-04-28158-5 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-28393-0 (e-book)

Copyright 2015 by Koninklijke Brill nv, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill nv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff and Hotei Publishing.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill nv provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.

Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Contents

- Preface VII
List of Abbreviations X
List of Contributors XI
- 1 Introduction
Francisco Suárez, the Man and His Work 1
Victor Salas and Robert Fastiggi
- 2 Political Thought and Legal Theory in Suárez 29
Jean-Paul Coujou
- 3 Suárez, Heidegger, and Contemporary Metaphysics 72
Jean-François Courtine
- 4 Suárez on the Subject of Metaphysics 91
Rolf Darge
- 5 Suárez and the Baroque Matrix of Modern Thought 124
Costantino Esposito
- 6 Francisco Suárez as Dogmatic Theologian 148
Robert Fastiggi
- 7 Suárez on the Metaphysics and Epistemology of Universals 164
Daniel Heider
- 8 Suárez's Psychology 192
Simo Knuuttila
- 9 Suárez's Influence on Protestant Scholasticism
The Cases of Hollaz and Turretín 221
John Kronen
- 10 Suárez on Beings of Reason 248
Daniel Novotný
- 11 Suárez and the Natural Law 274
Paul Pace, S.J.

- 12 **Original Features of Suárez's Thought** 297
José Pereira
- 13 **Suárez's Doctrine of Concepts**
How Divine and Human Intellection are Intertwined 313
Michael Renemann
- 14 **Between Thomism and Scotism**
Francisco Suárez on the Analogy of Being 336
Victor Salas
- Epilogue 363
- Bibliography 367
- Index of Authors 379
- Index of Subjects 382

Suárez and the Baroque Matrix of Modern Thought

Costantino Esposito

1 'Baroque Thought'

Scholars now almost universally accept that Francisco Suárez's metaphysical, theological, and juridical thought constitutes a source of primary importance for the rise and development of modern philosophy. Indeed, one could even say that just such a figure as Suárez reveals the inadequacy of the interpretation of Renaissance and early modern thought as the mere gesture of breaking away from the scholastic tradition. One just has to consider the decisive role played by Jesuit teachings in Europe during the seventeenth century in order to perceive this tradition as a widely shared structure of thought, thanks, and only thanks, to which (paradoxically) the so-called 'moderns' could be 'against it'. The scholastic tradition invented and nourished, in some way, its own enemies, who often took their fundamental concepts directly from it.

Certainly, concepts that are similar can be used in partially—or indeed, totally—different contexts, and lead to incommensurate results. Yet, at the same time, one cannot deny that some of the *late-scholastic* theoretical options (from gnoseology to metaphysics, from theology to philosophy of law) lend themselves to being used in the decidedly and programmatically *anti-scholastic* perspectives of modern thought. Thus, at times, the conceptual dependence and debt between the two camps are to be sought not only, and not primarily, in what they explicitly have in common, but exactly in what most distinguishes them, as if their close bond persisted *sub contrario*. And one must not forget that this direct line between scholastic philosophy and modern thought is accompanied by, and often merges with, another line of thought, which divides—and at the same time binds together—the Catholic and Protestant theological camps, starting from the second half of the sixteenth century.

These forces—at once unitary and conflictual—in which doctrinal differences and ruptures should always be interpreted on the basis of a continuity and homogeneity of a metaphysical, or rather 'ontological', kind, are what we have come to call 'baroque thought'. It has one especially peculiar feature: that of constituting the theoretical 'matrix', or dominant line of thought, for a whole series of notably divergent, indeed conflicting, philosophical and theological doctrines. Hence, one could call it a 'neutral' matrix, which has represented the meeting point of a whole era—roughly from the Council of Trent to Kant's

critique of eighteenth-century rationalist *Schulmetaphysik*—because it has provided the conceptual basis and specific lexis for a variety of competing theories and conceptions of the world.

One should not be surprised by the fact that we indicate two very different phenomena as the temporal limits of our historical characterisation of baroque thought, for there is a *fil rouge* tying them together: the critical-transcendental turning point of classical metaphysics, effected by Kant, is undoubtedly the result of both the early modern contestation and the re-foundation of scholastic ontology. Yet, scholastic ontology, for its part, had already wrought a new synthesis and a profound ‘metabolisation’ of the divergent tendencies in the medieval schools within the uninterrupted Aristotelian tradition, in view of a renewed arrangement of Catholic theology first, and Protestant theology later.

In this historical characterisation of the ‘baroque’, which could ideally be dated from the 1560s (following the Council of Trent, which concluded in 1563) to the 1760s (including the publication of Kant’s *The Only Possible Argument for the Demonstration of the Existence of God* in 1763), Suárez undoubtedly occupies a key place.

Suárez must always be collocated within the context and tasks required by his time, which included: (1) the revival of the great legacy of medieval theology through the systematic reclamation of Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* as the doctrinal canon of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in contrast to Lutheranism; (2) the elaboration of a metaphysical discourse, that is, of an ontology and a natural theology that could serve as the foundations for a revealed theology; (3) the reflection on the new status of natural law (a kind of theological-juridical anthropology) and of international law, in order to deal with problems linked to the spread of Church and State among the indigenous populations of the New World; and (4) the dissemination of his own teachings, whether directly or indirectly, in some of the most important Catholic universities and colleges, and then, surprisingly, even in some of the universities of Reformation Europe, especially with regard to his new system of ‘metaphysics’.

Yet, apart from looking back, Suárez must also be evaluated by looking ahead, since it is from him, or through him, that certain threads, which we will find in the weave of modern thought, begin to unravel. Hence, Suárez forms, as it were, a crossroads, a place of passage and *chiasmus*, indeed, an exquisitely *baroque* place, in which tradition ‘curves’ in order to form a new horizon of modernity, and modernity brings with it, shaping it in a new ‘fold’¹ and from unexpected perspectives, the metaphysical tradition of the past. Let us now try to follow some of these curvatures.

1 Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Le pli. Leibniz et le Baroque* (Paris, 1988), pp. 38–54.

2 From Theology to Philosophy (and Back Again)

Francisco Suárez was never a ‘philosopher’ as such, but *only* a professional ‘theologian’—and what a theologian! If one takes into account the fact that from the mid 1570s he was one of the key players not only in the Society of Jesus, but also along the vaster front of the Roman Catholic Church in the doctrinal battle with Catholic orthodoxy, his theological orientation becomes more than obvious. The fact that a theologian would be concerned with philosophy is not, however, a novelty in the history of medieval thought, to which Suárez, as he regarded himself, is a true heir. In his case, though, we are faced with a new situation. On the one hand, he continues the consolidated theological practice in which philosophy—as a purely rational or natural science—must precede, on a logical and conceptual level, the ‘sacred doctrine’, that is, the science of revealed fact. On the other hand, he performs an inverse process that begins with revealed theology and seeks to elaborate a philosophical doctrine according to the order of reason alone, which can absorb and translate, on a purely natural plane, what mankind has apprehended historically as a fact of faith.

He thus carves a path—whether circular or zigzagging—that goes *both* from philosophy to theology and from theology to philosophy. Such an attempt certainly arises from the intention to fulfil the demands of the Counter Reformation, with its decisive reaffirmation of the natural (albeit fallen) goodness of mankind and the innate ability of reason to grasp the created being of all reality, as well as its completion through supernatural grace.

At the same time, the way in which Suárez seeks to achieve this goal is by elaborating an independent system (and a treatise) of philosophy, which, while excogitated in the light of *sacred doctrine* and with a view to serving the latter, can in principle be conceived and used apart from theology. This is indeed what was beginning to happen in various European universities, both Catholic and Protestant, in the seventeenth century, and then more decisively in rationalist scholasticism of the eighteenth century. Precisely because Suárez’s purpose was to fulfil a specifically theological task, he was the initiator of an independent and neutral treatment of metaphysics, that which today we would call modern ontology.

In a (perhaps still undervalued) work from 1959 on the fate of metaphysics from Aquinas to Heidegger, Gustav Siewerth writes that Suárez’s *Disputationes metaphysicae* represents the ‘last work’ of scholasticism, precisely because it demonstrates the dialectic movement between metaphysics and theology, which constitutes one of the most vital matrices of modern thought.² It represents,

2 Cf. Gustav Siewerth, “Das Schicksal der Metaphysik von Thomas zu Heidegger,” in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. W. Behler and A. von Stockhausen (Düsseldorf, 1987), vol. 4, pp. 184–185.

moreover, a dramatic and historic turning point. In approaching philosophical discourse from an acquired, or already fully known, theological presupposition, one runs the risk of continually reducing what is known through historical revelation to what can be known through the internal principles of purely natural knowledge. The consequence of such a move is that one would therefore be ‘transferring to philosophy the theological apriority of thought’ (that is, dogmatic content or *depositum fidei*) and leaving theology with the mere role of an ‘apologetic demonstration’ of a revealed datum.³

This is the short circuit between theology and philosophy that Hans Urs von Balthasar calls ‘the vicious circle, almost without an exit, of neo-scholasticism’, in which the biblical revelation of God no longer seems to imply the ‘philosophical mystery of being’; and while the latter is reduced to general and neutral principles, theology, for its part, is reduced to an apology in an altogether clerical sense.⁴

In effect, Suárez’s first metaphysical gesture consists of assuming the *role* of metaphysician, *since he is already* a theologian; in other words, he represents a philosopher as a ‘character’, but is a theologian as an ‘interpreter’. The paradoxical consequence of this procedure is that the more the metaphysical character has to be represented, in his true nature, as a pure researcher of the natural reason of being, the more his interpreter has *to know already* the origin and ultimate end of every thing. From this perspective, one can fully appreciate the significance of the fact that—as Suárez clearly states at the beginning of the *Disputationes metaphysicae*—he had to interrupt his treatment of sacred doctrine in order to prepare a didactic-systematic instrument for his young theology students:

...every day I saw more and more clearly the extent to which divine and supernatural theology needs and requires this human and natural [theology]—to such an extent that I did not hesitate to interrupt that unfinished work for a little while in order to give (or, better, restore) to this metaphysical doctrine its rightful place and standing, as it were. [...] In the present work I am doing philosophy in such a way as to keep always in mind that our philosophy should be Christian and a servant to divine theology. I have kept this goal in view, not only in discussing the questions, but even more so in choosing my views or opinions, inclining

3 Siewerth, *Das Schicksal der Metaphysik*, p. 260.

4 Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit*, vol. 3.1: *Im Raum der Metaphysik*, Part 2: *Neuzeit* (Einsiedeln, 1965), pp. 386–387.

toward those which seem to comport better with piety and revealed doctrine.⁵

More than just a traditional *praebula fidei* in order to understand God's supernatural revelation, this ground plan is a veritable hermeneutic circle from the *ratio metaphysica* to the *depositum fidei*. It is a circle that, nevertheless, is not perfect, for while it is true that, regarding doctrine, (revealed) theology is the starting point and goal of philosophical research, regarding our knowledge, it is philosophical research that makes possible the determination and even the 'fulfilment' of theological doctrine:

Even though divine and supernatural theology relies on the divine light and on principles revealed by God, still, because it is perfected by human discourse and reasoning, it is aided as well by truths known by the natural light. And it uses those truths as helpers and, so to speak, instruments in perfecting its own discourses and in illuminating divine truths. Now among all the natural sciences, the one that ranks first of all and goes by the name of First Philosophy is especially useful to sacred and supernatural theology. This is so, both because it comes closest of all of them to the cognition of divine matters, and also because it explains and confirms those natural principles which comprehend all things in general and which in some sense support and undergird every doctrine. [...] For these metaphysical principles and truths fit together with theological conclusions and arguments in such a way that if one takes away knowledge and complete understanding of the former, then knowledge of the latter must likewise be greatly undermined.⁶

5 *DM, Ratio et discursus totius operis. Ad lectorem* (ed. Vivès, vol. 25): "In dies tamen luce clarius intuebar, quam illa divina ac supernaturalis Theologia hanc humanam et naturalem desideraret ac requireret, adeo ut non dubitaverim illud inchoatum opus paulisper intermittere, quo huic doctrinae metaphysicae suum quasi locum ac sedem darem, vel potius restituerem. [...] Ita vero in hoc opere philosophum ago, ut semper tamen prae oculis habeam nostram philosophiam debere christianam esse, ac divinae Theologiae ministram. Quem mihi scopum praefixi, non solum in quaestionibus pertractandis, sed multo magis in sententiis, seu opinionibus seligendis, in eas propendens, quae pietati ac doctrinae revelatae subservire magis viderentur."

6 *Ibid.*, Prooemium (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 1): "Divina et supernaturalis theologia, quanquam divino lumine principiisque a Deo revelatis nitatur, quia vero humano discursu et ratiocinatione perficitur, veritatibus etiam naturae lumine notis juvatur, eisque ad suos discursus perficiendos, et divinas veritates illustrandas, tanquam ministris et quasi instrumentis utitur. Inter omnes autem naturales scientias, ea, quae prima omnium est, et nomen primae philosophiae obtinuit, sacrae ac supernaturali theologiae praecipue ministrat. Tum quia ad

Therefore, the task of metaphysics coincides with what is required by revealed theology, whereas the task of theology is already comprehended—by means of natural theology—*within* first philosophy. This was a very important moment in the ‘baroque’ reorganization of theological doctrine, entailing a new arrangement within philosophy itself. Accordingly, Suárez conceives the relation between natural theology (or ‘metaphysics’ *tout court*) and supernatural theology on the basis of another, epistemologically pre-existing relation, one between a *more general* part of first philosophy (which studies the general concept of being, together with its universal principles) and a *special* part (which considers the different kinds of determined or particular beings).

This is the late scholastic—or indeed, ‘modern’—reformulation of the famous *aporia* concerning the ‘object’ of first philosophy, which is both the study of being *qua* being (and its principles) and the study of the highest form of being, the ‘divine’ (*theologikē epistēmē*). The originality of Suárez’s contribution consists in presenting this reformulation as an editorial system, since he published the *Disputationes metaphysicae* in two volumes: the first (*Disp.* 1–28) is dedicated to the concept of being and its properties, while the second (*Disp.* 29–53) is dedicated to the different kinds of determined being, that is, God and His creatures. With this, the possibility of a revealed theological discourse comes to depend on the particular interpretation of the name, object, and task of metaphysics in its ‘general’ part.

In order to understand better what is really at stake in Suárez’s choice, it might be useful to compare it with the standard interpretation of metaphysics given by Thomas Aquinas, which is also elaborated from the perspective of a Christian theologian, but in a very different manner. In his Commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Aquinas observes that the term ‘metaphysics’ is properly assigned to *sapientia* (as the *scientia regulatrix* of all other forms of knowledge) in that it takes into consideration the universal principles of intellectual knowledge, which are being and everything that belongs to it, such as ‘the one and the many, potency and act’. When this same science instead considers those entities that are completely separate from sensible matter in their very being, such as God and the separate intelligences, it is then called ‘divine science or theology’. Finally, because this science considers the first causes of things, it also earns the name ‘first philosophy’.

divinarum rerum cognitionem inter omnes proxime accedit, tum etiam quia ea naturalia principia explicat atque confirmat, quae res universas comprehendunt, omnemque doctrinam quodammodo fulciunt atque sustentant.... Ita enim haec principia et veritates metaphysicae cum theologicis conclusionibus ac discursibus cohaerent, ut si illorum scientia ac perfecta cognitio auferatur, horum etiam scientiam nimium labefactari necesse sit.”

For Aquinas, these three considerations meet in a single science, since the first causes coincide with the separate substances, while that which they cause—i.e., being in general (*ens commune*)—is the only true ‘subject’ (*subiectum*) of this science. Indeed, knowledge of the causes of this subject is the result to which this science must lead.⁷ Aquinas, therefore, highlights—on the basis of Aristotelian epistemological principles⁸—an essential difference between the subject of metaphysics (i.e., being in general, which *can also* exist without matter) and the first causes of that subject (i.e., God and the intelligent substances, which *can never* exist in matter). This means that, for Aquinas, God can never be considered simply as the ‘object’ of metaphysics, neither in natural theology nor in revealed theology. Indeed, on the one hand, the locution *scientia Dei et beatorum* is a subjective genitive, indicating the knowledge that God has of Himself (and of all things) and not the knowledge that we have of Him; on the other hand, while *theologia nostra* does consider *res divinae*, it only does so in that they manifest themselves through revelation, hence our knowledge only participates through assimilation in the knowledge proper to God.⁹

But let us return to Suárez. At the beginning of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* he examines the different names for metaphysics, such as ‘wisdom’, ‘prudence’, ‘philosophy’, ‘first philosophy’, and ‘natural theology’, taking all of them from different passages in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. The last name, in particular, constitutes the linchpin around which the redefinition of this science turns: *naturalis theologia* “deals with God and divine things insofar as this is possible in the light of nature.” And *for the same reason* it is also properly called metaphysics, “as if it were constituted after physics or beyond physics” (*quasi post physicam, seu ultra physicam constituta*), both in the so-called ‘subjective’ sense, in that it considers those things discovered after physical things, and in

7 Thomas de Aquino, *In Metaph*, ed. R.M. Cathala and R. Spiazzi, “Prooemium”: “Ex quo apparet, quod quamvis ista scientia praedicta tria consideret, non tamen considerat quodlibet eorum ut subiectum, sed ipsum solum ens commune. Hoc enim est subiectum in scientia, cuius causas et passiones quaerimus, non autem ipsae causae alicuius generis quaesiti. Nam cognitio causarum alicuius generis, est finis ad quem consideratio scientiae pertingit.” On the problem of the relation between the ‘subject’ and ‘object’ of metaphysics in the trajectory Aristotle-Avicenna-Aquinas, see Jean-François Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique* (Paris, 1990), part I, cc. 1–2; Pasquale Porro, “Tommaso d’Aquino, Avicenna e la struttura della metafisica,” in *Tommaso d’Aquino e l’oggetto della metafisica*, ed., S.L. Brock (Rome, 2004), pp. 65–87.

8 For the epistemological principles of Aristotelean science, see *Posterior Analytics* 76b11ff.

9 On the relation between the theology of philosophers (*scientia divina*), true divine knowledge (*scientia Dei et beatorum*), and the theology of revelation (*sacra doctrina*), cf. Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 2.; *ibid.*, q. 5, a. 4, ad 5; *ST I*, q. 1, a. 2; *ibid.*, I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 1.

the 'objective' sense (*ex parte obiecti*), in that it deals with "the things that come after physical or natural things, because they go beyond the order of these and are constituted at a higher level of reality." So this science, as Aristotle says, will be *princeps et domina* with regard to all the others, "because it surpasses them in dignity and, in some way, establishes and confirms the principles of all the others."¹⁰

Yet if metaphysics indicates primarily 'natural theology' and deals with the highest level of reality, this means that the concept of God cannot be considered *only* as the cause of the object of metaphysics (being), but must itself fall directly within the object of this science. For this to be possible, God Himself must be considered, first and foremost, *as a being*, which presupposes the reason of 'being as such'. The *ratio* of supreme being—the *ipsum esse subsistens*, or universal cause of being, of which Aquinas speaks—can be traced back to the *ratio entis in quantum ens* along a precise genealogy that begins with Avicenna and, passing through Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus, comes to Suárez (and, as we know, continues beyond the Spanish Jesuit, at least to Wolff and the eighteenth-century *Schulmetaphysik*).

This *ratio entis* is literally absolute, since it precedes—as an 'objective' concept—both creator and creatures (that is, determined beings), letting us think of them both simply as beings, and not, in the first instance, as in a relation among themselves. Since Suárez characterises *metaphysics* as *natural theology* (in view of *revealed theology*), he is obliged to base it on a preliminary 'ontology' (even though this term is not used in the *DM*).¹¹

3 Metaphysics and the Connective Tissue of Being

A metaphysics thus 'programmed' in an ontological sense can only have *ens in quantum ens reale* as its 'adequate object' (*adaequatum obiectum*). This is a minimal and abstract concept that *contains* everything, except for merely accidental beings and 'beings of reason' (even though Suárez will eventually include them in the *DM*). Beyond real substances and accidents, 'being as such' (*ens ut sic*) also includes God and immaterial substances. God's is a strange metaphysical fate. On the one hand, He is the principle of all beings, and in this

10 *DM* 1 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 2): "Varia metaphysicae nomina."

11 In the most recent research, the first occurrence of the word 'ontology' is found in *Ogdoas scolastica* (1606) by the Calvinist theologian and metaphysician Jakob Lorhard, or Lorhardus; see Marco Lamanna, "Sulla prima occorrenza del termine 'ontologia'. Una nota bibliografica," *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 6 (2006): 557–570.

sense Suárez labels Him as *praecipuus obiectus*, the primary object of metaphysics. Yet, on the other hand, He is included ‘in a precise sense’ (*praecise*) within the *ratio entis ut sic*. In this case, therefore, it is as if the consideration of being ‘as such’ (*ut sic*) prescinded from a creatural relation, distanced itself from all generation (though *post factum*, since every being is what it is because it is created) and, in some way, reabsorbed in itself both origin and provenance. In other words, being is to be understood by abstracting it from its relation with the creator, even though, obviously, Suárez the theologian always presents this interpretation of being as a hypothesis, or better, as a merely logical-conceptual *fictio*.

In effect, how could a simple philosophical abstraction ever compromise God’s priority? While it does not compromise His position at the summit of the whole system, it definitely compromises His presence within the *thinkability* of being. God creates being, true, but given that metaphysics must abstract from its datum, being can indeed be thought of in an absolute sense (*absolute*) apart from God, even though one must continue to recognise God as the most important ‘contraction’ or ‘determination’ of this being. Suárez writes:

God belongs to this science, not only as the cause of the object of metaphysics, but also as its principal part [...] Since God is an object [that is] knowable naturally in some way [...] He can fall within the sphere of a natural science, not only as extrinsic principle, but also as principal object: [...] so God falls, in an absolute sense, under the object of this science.¹²

As an extrinsic principle, He is the real cause; as the principal object, He is under the formal principle of *noesis*, that is, logical non-contradiction. ‘Knowableness’ thus becomes the measure of the relation to God, no longer considered God as such, but as *ens*—indeed, the supreme *ens*. Knowledge has thus definitively fixed God’s place (and, by God, what a place!) within and under being.

Yet with the interruption of the original and constitutive nexus between *ens commune* and its first cause (an interruption only on a metaphysical and not on a physical or theological-revealed level), even the concept of being has a

12 *DM* 1.1.19 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, pp. 8–9): “*Deus non solum ut causa obiecti metaphysicae, sed etiam ut pars illius praecipua ad hanc scientiam pertinet. [...] Nam Deus est obiectum naturaliter scibile alioquo modo [...]; ergo potest cadere sub aliquam naturalem scientiam, non solo ut principium extrinsecum, sed etiam ut obiectum praecipuum [...]* ergo absolute Deus cadit sub obiectum huius scientiae.”

different meaning from that in Aquinas. For the latter, being does indeed signify that which is divided into ten genera and that which indicates the truth of a proposition, but also, and above all, it signifies (in its primary meaning) the derivative of the verb *esse* in virtue of an *actus essendi*.¹³ For Suárez, on the other hand, the primary meaning of being is that of ‘thing’ (*res*), in the sense of ‘essence’ or ‘quiddity’. Being is only *that* which is, irrespective of the provenance or derivation of its being. Starting from this point, one can (or must) *also* think of the relation between that which is and the subsisting being (or God), but this is only done *afterwards*, in a second moment, as an addition with regard to the primary meaning of being, which remains the key to open (or close, if you like) the total mystery of the sense of being. The basic consequence of this structuring of the ‘object’ of metaphysics is its unity, or oneness. The mental act with which we think of being (what Suárez calls the ‘formal concept’) forms a single, indivisible content, and is gathered in it, as the *objective concept*:

I say, then [...] that to the formal concept of being corresponds a single objective concept, adequate and immediate, which does not expressly state either substance or accident, God or creature, but all these things as one, in other words, since they are in some way similar and converge in being.¹⁴

So this is literally a *neutral* concept. On the one hand, being is a ‘general’ concept, the simplest reason for everything, and therefore *excludes* all diversity (that is, being this or that thing, since every determination and diversity always requires the addition of something to the abstract reason of ‘beingness’). Yet, on the other hand, it is also *included* in all possible objects, even in God, which present themselves as the contractions or specifications of being.

Being is thus grasped and defined as ‘object’; or rather, it delineates the horizon of an ‘object-ness’ in general, which precedes the existence itself of the object and is identified as the mere possibility of its knowable essence.¹⁵ The concept of being *qua* being is intended as a *ratio* that connects and comprehends all things,

13 Cf. for example, Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, c. 1; *In I Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1; *Summa contra gentiles* I, c. 25, n. 10; *In Metaph.*, l. IV, lect. 2, n. 553.

14 *DM* 2.2.8 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 72): “Dico ergo [...], conceptui formali entis respondere unum conceptum obiectivum adaequatum, et immediatum, qui expresse non dicit substantiam, neque accidens, neque Deum, nec creaturam, sed haec omnia per modum unius, scilicet quatenus sunt inter se aliquo modo similia, et conveniunt in essendo.”

15 On Suárez’s concept of being as ‘an objectness without an object’, see Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 157 sq. (the expression comes from André de Muralt).

both finite and infinite, creatures and creator, to the extent that it becomes a veritable '*fabricatio universalitatis*' (DM 6.6.12). In this sense it is *transcendens*, not only because it is trans-genus and trans-category (i.e., indeterminable in any predication, but preceding and founding every category), but also because it can be something, in the minimal sense in which something 'is' (being), in contrast to being (or being opposed to) nothing. Such a *ratio entis* (objective since it is formal) grasps the *similitudo* and *convenientia* that all real beings possess in their *raison d'être*, and so they all convene:

...just as being and non-being are diverse and opposed primarily among themselves—the reason why we say that the very first principle is the one according to which *something is or is not*—in the same way, any being possesses a certain congruence or resemblance to any other being, since our intellect finds more congruence between substance and accident than between substance and non-being or nothing (*nihil*). Even the creature participates, in a certain way, in the being of God and so we say that it is, through some congruence or resemblance in being, at least the vestige of God....¹⁶

Yet here we notice a 'jump' between the two orders: the congruence between *all* beings—including God—is based essentially on the minimal reason of *not being nothing*, and only this can make the 'positive' participation of the creature (*vestigium*) in God thinkable (at least in a purely metaphysical sense).

4 Being and its 'Inferiors': Distinction, Inclusion, Analogy

Already with regard to the formal concept of *ens*, and then even more so with regard to the objective concept, a problem emerges regarding the relation between the transcendental concept (*transcendens*) of being and beings that convene in virtue of this concept. In short, this is a problem of the relation between the formal-objective unity of the concept of being, and its analogical

¹⁶ DM 2.2.14 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 74): "...nam, sicut ens et non ens sunt primo diversa et opposita, propter quod dicitur esse primum principium omnium, quodlibet esse vel non esse, ita quodlibet ens habet aliquam convenientiam, et similitudinem cum quolibet ente; majorem enim convenientiam invenit intellectus inter substantiam et accidens, quam inter substantiam et non ens seu nihil; creatura etiam participat aliquo modo esse Dei, et ideo dicitur saltem esse vestigium ejus propter aliquam convenientiam et similitudinem in essendo."

inclusion and predication in determined beings. Suárez's preference is immediately given to the analogy of intrinsic attribution:

...the analogy of being does not consist in some form, present intrinsically in just one of the analogues, and extrinsically in all the others; rather, it consists in a being, or entity, participated in by all of them intrinsically, and so it is in this reason that all things convene in reality, and consequently, they possess an objective unity in the reason of being.¹⁷

From this derives a twofold consideration of the relation between the general concept of being and the concept of determined beings. On the one hand, there is an *intellectual distinction* between the objective concept of being and all the particular reasons of being (for example, the reason of substance or accident); on the other hand, we find a *real indistinction* between the concept of being and the *inferiora* in which, from time to time, it exists.¹⁸ In other words, the problem lies in establishing what is the least possible distinction present in things, whether beyond the "perfect real distinction between reciprocally separable beings, there can be found in things—prior to [being found] in the intellect—another minor distinction, which is what usually subsists between a thing and its mode;"¹⁹ that is, whether being a *determined* thing is really a distinct mode from the thing itself (as when we say, for example, that the substance adds to the being a mode that the being in itself does not express). In an opinion that Suárez attributes to Duns Scotus and the Scotists, "being expresses an objective concept, distinct and precise, in reality, from all the inferiors, however simple they are, such as substance, accident and so on."²⁰ For Suárez, on the other hand, "one must affirm that the objective concept of being, since it exists in reality itself, is *not* something distinct and precise, in reality, from the inferiors in which it exists."²¹

17 Ibid., 2.2.14 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 75): "...analogia entis non est in aliqua forma, quae intrinsece tantum sit in uno analogato et extrinsece in aliis, sed in esse seu entitate quae intrinsece participatur ab omnibus; in illa ergo ratione habent omnia realem convenientiam, et consequenter unitatem objectivam in ratione entis."

18 Cf. *ibid.*, 2.2.15ff, *ibid.*, 2.3.7 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 75–76, 83).

19 *Ibid.*, 2.3.1 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 82): "...supponendo, praeter distinctionem realem perfectam, quae intercedit inter entitates mutuo separabiles, posse in rebus ante intellectum aliam minorem inveniri, qualis esse solet inter rem et modum rei..."

20 Cf. *ibid.*, 2.3.6 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 83). Here Suárez refers to John Duns Scotus, *In I Sent.*, d. 3, qq. 1 e 3; *ibid.*, d. 8, q. 2; *In II Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1.

21 *Ibid.*, 2.3.7 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 83): "...dicendum est, conceptum entis objectivum prout in re ipsa existit, non esse aliquid ex natura rei distinctum ac praecisum ab inferioribus in quibus existit."

This is one of Suárez's most typical theses, and has been largely validated by posterity. The primary notion of being, at least in metaphysics, is not *participial*, which refers to the actual existence of a thing ('something existing in act'), but *nominal*, which indicates a "real essence, that is, not invented nor illusory, but rather true and apt to exist really."²²

So what does 'real essence' mean? (1) In a negative sense, "real essence is that which does not entail any contradiction, nor is it a mere invention of the intellect" (*quae in sese nullam involvit repugnantiam, neque est mere conficta per intellectum*). (2) In a positive sense, it is *a posteriori* "the principle or the root of real operations or effects" (*principium vel radix realium operationum, vel effectuum*), and *a priori* "real essence is that which can be really produced by God and can be constituted in the being of an actual being" (*dicimus essentiam esse realem, quae a Deo realiter produci potest, et constitui in esse entis actualis*).²³

This carries two important consequences. The first is that, for Suárez, the metaphysical relation essence-existence (*ens nomen-ens participium*) is absolutely not to be identified with the relation potency-act, since already in 'being' as a noun—that is, as a real essence—are included not only being in potency (the concept of a real being still without existence), but also being in act, to the extent that the notion of essence is virtually 'determined' or 'apt' to actual existence.²⁴ The second consequence is that being, intended metaphysically as a noun, is an *essential predicate* of every determined being: "it is predicated, in a quiddative sense, of its inferiors," and certainly not 'absolutely' (in which case it could only be predicated of God), but relatively, of its being as creature:

...so, even though being in act does not belong to the essence of a creature, nevertheless, the order of being or the aptitude for existence belongs *intrinsically* and *essentially* to its concept, and in this way, being is an essential predicate.²⁵

This solution to the problem of the relation between the concept of being and its inferiors leads Suárez to establish the relation between creature and creator as a *particular* or *special* determination of the more fundamental relation

22 Ibid., 2.4.5 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 89): "...si ens sumatur prout est significatum hujus vocis in vi nominis sumptae, ejus ratio consistit in hoc, quod sit habens essentiam realem, id est non fictam, nec chymericam, sed veram et aptam ad realiter existendum."

23 Ibid., 2.4.7 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 90).

24 Cf. *ibid.*, 2.4.12 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 91).

25 Ibid., 2.4.14 (ed. Vivès, vol. 25, p. 92): "...quamvis ergo actu esse non sit de essentia creaturae, tamen ordo ad esse, vel aptitudo essendi est *de intrinseco et essentiali* conceptu ejus; atque hoc modo ens praedicatum est *essentiale*" (my italics).

between a particular determination of (or a secondary addition to) the metaphysical constitution of every being (in this case, the being-creator or the being-created) and a being instead considered in itself, *only* as a being:

...it seems clear that the creature, in that it is a being, does not come to be defined through the creator, or the being of God, but through its being *as such*, and because it exists outside of nothingness: if indeed the relation to God were *added* to it, by saying, for example, that the creature is a being in virtue of its participation in divine being, then already the creature could no longer be defined as a being, but only as a determined being, in that it is created. Finally, by now it has already been shown that being is expressed with a single concept for everything that is contained in it, and that the reason for being that is expressed in creatures can constitute the starting point for finding a similar reason, existing in a more elevated way, in the creator too.²⁶

Certainly the theologian *knows well* that every being exists in that it is caused in its being by God, hence in the extent to which it is constituted in a relation of dependence on something other than itself. However, for the metaphysician, this relation can—indeed must—be suspended; in order to conceive being, one must no longer think of it necessarily and intrinsically *as a* relation. Only thanks to this absolute concept of being can one *subsequently* find a similarity between creator and creature, but then it will be too late to retrieve this relation at the origin of the concept itself of being. Nevertheless, one must not forget that the metaphysical pre-eminence of the concept of being as such, as opposed to the concept of creature-creator, has the sole purpose, for Suárez, of safeguarding (paradoxically) the very order of creation as possible and thinkable on the basis of natural reason.

5 The Invention of ‘Pure Nature’

Here the matrix of ‘baroque’ metaphysics again reveals itself, imbued moreover with the anti-Lutheran motivations elaborated by the Council of Trent,

²⁶ Ibid., 28.3.15 (ed. Vivès, vol. 26, p. 18): “Item constat, creaturam, ut ens est, non definiri per creatorem aut per esse Dei, sed esse ut sic, et quia est extra nihil; nam si addatur habitudo ad Deum, verbi gratia, creaturam esse ens, quia est participatio divini esse, sic non iam definitur creatura, *ut ens est, sed ut tale ens est*, nimirum creatum. Denique iam supra ostensum est, ens uno conceptu dici de omnibus sub illo contentis, et rationem entis in

which sought to re-propose the classical ‘congruence’ between Catholic theology and natural metaphysics, by means of a systematic metaphysical re-foundation of theological discourse. In particular, Reformation theology had opened up a rift between the natural and the supernatural, between the created world and the transcendence of the Creator, between logical possibility and revealed fact, all of which had to be mended.

The way in which Suárez recomposes or mends this rift is especially worthy of note. He reaffirms the concordance between natural thought and the *depositum fidei*, while holding fast to the question raised by Luther about the radical separation between God and the world, and the unfathomable difference between the natural and the supernatural. In the Catholic response (at least, as proposed by Suárez), the way to safeguard this difference is not to set grace against a nature conceived in terms of an absolute fall and definitive decadence, but rather to think of an intermediate structure—a so-called ‘pure nature’—which allows us to determine afresh the nexus between grace and *natura lapsa*.

In other words, a ‘heuristic’ structure needed to be elaborated, which would allow the connection between these two irreducibly disconnected planes. From a Lutheran theological perspective, the gap between the natural and the supernatural could be filled only by the inscrutable action of divine grace, which could only be conceived by man through faith (*solo fide*), but which could no longer be ‘thought’ within the terms of a metaphysical discourse. Suárez tries, instead, to think of another nature, one not dominated by sin, which in principle—or better, as a hypothesis—does not need grace (hence it is *pure nature*), and with regard to which divine grace is effectively free, that is, not a must.

The question is developed by Suárez in the *De legibus*, especially in his treatment of natural law. For Suárez, in order to comprehend the concept of natural law, one has to consider that human life is oriented toward an ultimate goal that is not single but dual, both natural and supernatural. The pre-Christian philosophers “did not recognize a supernatural end for man, but only treated of a certain happiness in this life, or better, of a condition conducive to spending it in peace and justice.” As a consequence, they conceived laws “only with a view to this end,” and only distinguished between ‘natural law’ and ‘human law’ (the latter in the sense of ‘civil law’):

But since faith teaches that all men are oriented toward the supernatural goal of a future life, to be pursued with adequate means, then rightly

creaturis inventam posse esse initium inveniendi similem rationem altiori modo in creatore existentem.”

sacred theology concludes that this natural law is necessary for a very different motive, and that men need different positive laws with respect to those which philosophers have managed to determine.²⁷

It is important to underline that, for Suárez, the passage from an exclusively natural order in human life to a supernatural one does not entail the former being overcome by the latter, but rather, it entails maintaining—on a hypothetical level, as a mental experiment—a *merely* natural plane, distinct from the plane of an *effectively* existing nature; unlike the latter, it does not require supernatural grace in order to be complete and perfect. Man's natural condition, therefore, is not only distinguished from the action of grace, but is doubled, in its turn, into two states of nature. The first is *indifferent* to grace, while the second is oriented and *predisposed* to it.

This requires that man himself be considered in a *double register* (*secundum duplicem naturam et duplex rationis lumen*). In the first, man must be considered in his *pure nature*, that is, in his substance as a rational soul, hence in the light of a reason that is innate to that substance (*secundum puram naturam seu substantiam animae rationalis et consequenter secundum rationis lumen illi connaturale*); in the second, however, man must be considered according to the *nature of grace*, which infuses him from above, hence in the divine and supernatural light of faith, guiding and governing his earthly life (*iuxta naturam gratiae desuper homini infusae et secundum divinum ac supernaturale lumen fidei per quod pro statu vitae regitur et gubernatur*).²⁸ So, on the one hand, there would seem to be a decisive metaphysical 'jump' between the two orders (nature-grace), while on the other hand, these orders belong together in a deeper way than might at first appear:

One can distinguish, therefore, a twofold natural law, one *purely natural*, the other *simply supernatural* but *nevertheless natural* in a certain sense, that is, in relation to grace. So, while even pure natural law is divine, since it emanates from God, the natural law of the divine order is much more divine. The former [pure natural law] comes from God through nature, from which it emanates as a property; the latter, on the other hand, comes

27 *De leg.*, 1.3.11 (ed. Vivès, vol. 5, p. 10; Pereña, vol. 1, pp. 46–47): "At vero cum fides doceat homines ad finem supernaturalem vitae futurae per convenientia media in hac vita exequenda ordinari, recte sacra theologia infert longe aliter esse necessariam hanc legem naturalem et pluribus legibus positivis homines indigere, quam iidem philosophi fuerint assecuti."

28 Cf. *ibid.*, 1.3.12 (ed. Vivès, vol. 5, p. 10; Pereña, vol. 1, p. 47).

from God, who instils grace and casts a supernatural light in order to direct men in the observance of the dictates of this law, with the help of stimulating and adjuvant grace [...] And so, one can say that both laws are innate to the human race.²⁹

Yet precisely because both derive from God and so both are innate to the human race, the relation between *purely natural* law and natural law *through grace* allows us to think of a *twofold order*: a pure nature and a pure grace, which are indeed coordinated, but also conceivable *ab origine* in terms of their discreteness.

This twofold system can be verified in Suárez's treatise *De gratia*, especially in the Prolegomenon entitled *De statibus humanae naturae*.³⁰ The initial problem here is whether man was created in a state of pure nature in order to have a supernatural end (*An possit homo in statu purae naturae creari, in ordine ad finem supernaturalem*).³¹ This is a strange question for a Catholic theologian, who begins from a point of knowledge of the gift and intercession of supernatural grace! Nevertheless, in this case too, Suárez poses the question just *hypothetically*, with a precise apologetic intention (against the Pelagian theory that all nature is already predisposed and destined *in itself* for grace) and in order to emphasise the complete detachment of absolutely free divine action, in contrast to what is due by nature to nature (not only in the face of the challenge represented by the Protestant Reformation, but also in the light of the famous *de auxiliis* controversy between Jesuits and Dominicans, on the aid given by divine grace to human freedom).

29 Ibid., 1.3.12-13 (ed. Vivès, vol. 5, p. 10; Pereña, vol. 1, pp. 47-48): "Si ergo lex naturalis duplex distingui potest: una pure naturalis, alia simpliciter supernaturalis; naturalis autem respective per comparationem ad gratiam; unde cum lex naturalis etiam pura divina sit, quia a Deo manat, multo magis lex naturalis divini ordinis divina est; nam prior est a Deo mediante natura a qua manat, tanquam proprietates eius; posterior autem est a Deo per se infundente gratiam et ipsum supernaturale lumen ac actualiter etiam dirigente homines ad dictamina illius legis perficienda per auxilia gratiae excitantis et adiuvantis. Denique utraque lex dici potest connaturalis generi humano" (my italics).

30 The elaboration of a treatise on grace dates to the courses held at the Collegio Romano in the early 1580s and to those held in Coimbra at the end of the 1590s, which were published posthumously between 1619 and 1621. In the Vivès edition, the *Tractatus de gratia Dei seu de Deo salvatore, iustificatore, et liberi arbitrii adiutore per gratiam suam* takes up four volumes (from nn. 7-10), with a fifth volume (n. 11) of theological pamphlets that deal with, among other things, the fundamental points of the so-called *de auxiliis* controversy, on the efficacious help given by God to human freedom.

31 *De gratia*, prol.4.1.1 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 179).

Among the different distinctions that can be made between the states of human nature, the first is that between *status viae* and *status patriae*. However, this distinction is not taken into consideration directly, since what interests Suárez is not so much our beatitude in heaven as the progress of our life on earth. In order to understand this progress, says Suárez, theologians refer to a second distinction, that between *status naturae integrae* and *status naturae lapsae*. Yet a third distinction is also possible—and here Suárez is accompanied by Gaetano Thiene and the ‘more recent theologians’—in which we do not begin from the states that “human nature has in fact assumed at different times” (*in diversis temporibus de facto habuit humana natura*), and instead, “we suppose that none of these is a state of pure nature” (*supponimus autem neutrum illorum esse statum purae naturae*). Considered as a mere hypothesis, the *status purae naturae* comes before the other two pairs, since in the latter something is always *added*—namely, God’s grace—which they lack in principle. And so:

...even though this state [of pure nature] *has not in fact been verified*, as I take for granted and as will be shown by sound doctrine in the following, *one can nevertheless think of it as possible*; indeed, it will have to be taken into consideration in order to understand the other states, since this state effectively constitutes *the basis of the others*.

Given its fundamental role, therefore, and in view of the whole doctrinal system, the hypothetical state of pure nature is treated *before* the others, and “only *after* can one speak of the other two and the various members into which they can be subdivided.”³²

The *status purae naturae*, furthermore, can be understood in two ways, one positive and one negative. In a positive sense, this state is one in which human nature possesses an essential perfection, and so all of its natural faculties are in concurrence with the divine, that is, there is divine providence that by nature belongs to it, in other words, which is naturally due to it (*concursum ac providentiam Dei sibi naturaliter debitam*). In this case, pure nature is simple created nature. But this state may also be understood in a negative sense, in the hypothesis that

32 Ibid., prol.4.1.2 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 179): “...et ideo Cajetan. et moderniores theologi tertium considerarunt statum, quem pure naturalium appellarunt, qui, *licet de facto non fuerit*, ut suppono, et infra juxta sanam doctrinam ostendam, *cogitari tamen potest ut possibilis*, et illius consideratio ad aliorum intelligentiam necessaria est, quia revera hic status est *veluti aliorum fundamentum*; ideoque de illo *in primis* dicendum est; *postea* vero de aliis duobus, et de variis membris in quae subdividi possunt, disseremus” (my italics).

there is *nothing* ‘added’ to it, that is, there is nothing that is not due to nature itself (*nihil naturae superadditum, ei non debitum*). So the latter would literally be above—or better, below—good and evil (*sive malum, sive bonum*), in other words, it would be a nature without sin and without punishment (*ut nec peccatum habeat, nec, quod est consequens, reatum poenae*). But, above all, it entails a nature untouched by the blessings of grace, since grace itself would be something *not* due to nature (hence the hypothesis is ‘negative’); it would be a perfection or completion that nature does not require *per se* (*neque etiam affecta sit aliquibus gratiae donis, aut perfectionibus naturae non debitis*).

Especially indicative of Suárez’s position is the fact that the ‘positive’ consideration of the state of pure nature—that is, being *simply* created in nature—does not constitute a problem (*nulla est quaestio*), and so is taken to be an obvious, accepted fact. Instead, what interests him *as a problem* is just the ‘negative’ meaning of *puritas naturalis*, that is, the *puritas* which only expresses a negation.³³

We can summarise the question as follows: can human nature be created pure, that is to say, completely without supernatural blessings or the ability to attain, through adequate means, those blessings of grace; in other words, can human nature have its own end?³⁴ The process suggested by Suárez is circular, or rather, zig-zagging: (a) one begins with the standard theological proofs of *sacred doctrine* (human nature created and redeemed by grace); (b) one goes backwards from this position and hypothesises their absence as *facta*, while restricting created nature to pure nature, to which grace is not due; (c) one can now return to understanding supernatural action in its absolute gratuitousness with regard to mere nature.

Regarding a: One begins with the affirmation that God could never create human nature without ordaining its ultimate goal, and so man could never be created—“*etiam de potentia absoluta*”—without an “*appetitus innatus*” or —“*pondus naturae ad videndum Deum*”—since this desire and this basic tendency (the true *gravitas* of human existence, as Augustine reveals in speaking of the disquiet in man’s heart) are not really distinct from nature itself, which cannot therefore be created without them: “*non ergo potest condi natura sine illo*.”³⁵

33 Cf. *ibid.*, prol.4.1.3 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, pp. 179–180).

34 *Ibid.*, prol.4.1.5 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 180): “Et ita quaerimus an possit humana natura ita pura creari, ut his donis supernaturalibus, et potestate proxima ad illa comparanda, omnino careat.” It is this capacity that, in a technical sense, is called *potestas proxima* in order to distinguish it from *potestas remota*, which coincides with the capacity for obedience inherent in human nature.

35 Cf. *ibid.*, prol.4.1.6 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 181).

Regarding b: If it is true that pure nature is in itself neutral with regard to an ultimate goal, then one must admit that the action of supernatural grace is necessary for nature, and so one would have to refute the hypothesis of a pure nature.

Regarding c: This refutation, however, would carry a greater risk, as represented by the Pelagians' position (in particular that of Michael Baius): the gift of grace would be inherent in human nature itself, which would mean that eternal life would simply be innate.³⁶

Accordingly, the object of the theological debate, as Suárez presents it, is to question the fundamental nexus between nature and grace, between the simply natural and the supernatural, in order to avoid the danger of the latter being assimilated by the former. And this is the paradoxical solution that he proposes: to dissolve, at least hypothetically, the constitutive nexus between man and his ultimate goal, and to reconstruct a state *in puris naturalibus* in order to emphasise the absolute difference of the *supernaturalis*.

This is a paradoxical solution, as mentioned above, because in rebutting the self-sufficient naturalism of the Pelagian heresy, Suárez makes a substantial concession with regard to the *thinkability* of the purity of nature. For the Pelagians, purity means, in a positive sense, self-sufficiency (i.e., nature would be capable, in itself, of grace, which would thus be due to it). For Suárez, on the other hand, purity means, in a negative sense, the *non-necessity* of grace, and so its *necessary gratuitousness* with regard to nature. Yet both arguments hinge on the same concept, which the Pelagians consider as real and Suárez as merely hypothetical.

To 'undo' the Pelagian error, therefore, and provide a sounder reason for many of the dogmas concerning divine grace ("*Hoc existimo esse necessarium fundamentum ad evertendum errorem Pelagii, et ad reddendam solidam rationem plurium dogmatum de divina gratia*") one must affirm that eternal happiness (*beatitudo*), for which man was created and which he is promised as a reward for his merits (*merces meritorum*), is simply and absolutely supernatural ("*simpliciter et absolute supernaturalem esse*"). Man's ultimate goal, his eternal happiness, is not a goal of human nature in itself, but is beyond it and is prepared by supernatural providence ("*supra naturam hominis est, et ex supernaturalis providentia praeparatur*").³⁷

36 Ibid., prol.4.1.7 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 181): "Inter assertionem autem Michaelis Baji, aliquas invenio ex quibus colligi potest illum sensisse vitam aeternam esse homini connaturalem, et quasi jure naturae debitam. Hinc enim dixisse videtur ad meritum vitae aeternae non esse necessariam gratiam adoptionis, sed solum ut homo legis opera faciat."

37 Ibid., prol.4.1.9 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 182), where we read again: "Illa ergo beatitudo supra naturam hominis existit, ut est quaedam formalis hominis perfectio, et consequenter etiam, ut est finis ultimus, supernaturalis est: nam beatitudo et finis ultimus idem sunt."

Suárez refers here to Thomas Aquinas and his doctrine of man's twofold ultimate goal. One goal is natural—or better, in the Aristotelian sense, inherent in man's intellectual nature—to which he tends through the impetus of his own nature, while the other exceeds nature, and is received through grace. Since the latter coincides with celestial happiness—i.e., with something supernatural—it must be said that if man is ordained to achieve such happiness—i.e., if he is created for this ultimate supernatural goal—this is not to be ascribed to his own nature (“*non esse ex naturae debito*”), but comes from God's free and amorous will (“*sed ex gratuita dilectione et voluntate Dei*”).³⁸

However, as often happens in Suárez's work, the explicit reference to Aquinas brings a silent (but appreciable) change of perspective. In my opinion, what is weakened, or indeed lost, in Suárez's reading is the fact that in Aquinas, the natural and the supernatural are conceived as a constitutive relation, not reducible either to a system of separateness or to one of inclusion; the difference and surplus between them (or, more precisely, of grace with regard to nature) does not mean that each can be thought without the other, but the opposite: the very difference of the supernatural comes to constitute the identity of the natural, without being annulled by it. For Suárez, on the other hand, it would seem that separation must precede this relation, which in turn must be understood as the *addition* of one term to another.³⁹

As Suárez himself admits, man was created *de facto* for a supernatural goal, and so he was created in grace (*omnis creatura intellectualis in gratia creata est*).⁴⁰ Certainly, he can lose his original sanctity through sin, as does Adam, but this confirms that he was never created in a state of pure nature, nor can he ever achieve it, since from an original state of grace (attested by the fact that he tends toward a supernatural goal), man does not pass to a state of pure nature, but to one of sin; and vice versa, from a state of sin, man does not pass to a state of pure nature, but returns to one of grace. So “as regards ordinary law, the rational creature cannot be, except in grace or in sin; hence not in pure nature.” However, for Suárez, the hypothesis of pure nature is too important, in view of a redefinition of the role of grace, to be jettisoned in virtue of the

38 Cf. *ibid.*, prol.4.1.10–11 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 182). For Thomas, see, for instance, *ST I*, q. 23, a. 1.

39 On this question, see the following two classic studies: Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel. Études historiques* (Paris, 1946), c. 5, and Michel Bastit, *Naissance de la loi moderne. La pensée de la loi de st. Thomas à Suárez* (Paris, 1990), part III.

40 *De gratia*, prol.4.1.13 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 183): “...dicendum est primo, *de facto* nullam creaturam intellectualem fuisse aut existisse unquam in puris naturalibus conditam, cum solo ordinem ad connaturalem finem, imo neque esse posse secundum legem ordinariam a Deo statutam” (my italics).

primary theological acquisition of *de facto* creation. There is, though, another possibility—at least *de iure*—that cannot be excluded:

God could have created man in a purely natural order with respect to his ultimate goal, without thereby changing his nature, that is, without denying man anything to which he is entitled because of his nature [...] what God has indeed given to man, beyond pure nature, is grace, and so He could also not have given [him] grace, while still conserving the other laws of nature.⁴¹

So if God wanted (*si vellet*), He could create, and also complete, *only* this natural capacity, and not give man anything that requires faith and grace (or rather, the mere *capacitas oboedentialis*) as its basis. On the one hand, “grace is not due to nature” (*gratia non est naturae debita*), but on the other hand, even if “human nature lacked grace, it would not be without anything that is its due” (*licet humana natura illa careret, nulla re sibi debita privaretur*).⁴²

In order to save the transcendent irreducibility of grace, Suárez leads us to think that, even though man was created for some kind of happiness and ultimate goal, he was not necessarily created for a happiness that is more than natural, and so is not necessarily lacking a supernatural happiness (what Suárez calls here ‘*clara visio Dei*’). In short, he *could* have been created in a state of pure nature, without the *appetitum naturalis ad videndum Deum*.⁴³ The *ratio a priori* for this lies in the fact that there is no active, or passive, natural potential in man for beatific vision—that is, for complete happiness—nor for grace. In other words, there is no potential in man with respect to which such a vision constitutes an innate goal.

True, in order to receive the blessings of sanctified grace and instilled virtues, man does have the right *potentia oboedentialis*, which allows him to receive an action coming from above without its following the necessary order

41 Ibid., prol.4.1.16 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 184): “Secundo, dicendum est potuisse Deum creare hominem in puris naturalibus respectu finis ultimi, non immutando naturam ejus vel aliquid ei naturaliter debitum negando. [...] quia quidquid Deus contulit homini ultra puram naturam est gratia; ergo potuit illam non dare, servatis alias legibus naturae.”

42 Ibid., prol. 4.1.18 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 184).

43 Ibid., prol.4.1.19 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 185): “Nam est quidem verum, hominem non posse connaturali modo creari, nisi propter aliquam beatitudinem, et finem ultimum; negamus vero *necessario* fuisse creandum propter beatitudinem, quae consistit in visione clara Dei, nam illa supernaturalis est, et non deest alia beatitudo naturalis, propter quam homo in pura natura creari posset” (my italics).

of natural laws, and so it cannot be induced or caused by this natural order. However, for Suárez, this is precisely what does not allow for a direct connection between desire and vision. With respect to the *visio Dei*, human potential is a *potentia neutra*. If this were not the case, man would desire ‘naturally’ to know as the angels know; that is, he would tend by nature toward an abstract knowledge of God and things, which would be instilled in him. But this is not true, for if it were, it would be like saying that the human body tends naturally to fly; hence, one cannot think that man tends *naturally* toward that specific mode of divine knowledge, which is beatific vision.⁴⁴

From this perspective, nature is *sufficient in itself* and its appetite is already *fulfilled* naturally. However, it is clear—and worth repeating—that for a Catholic theologian this is, and must remain, a mere rational hypothesis, not a fact. One could almost say that it is more a heuristic fiction than a verifiable fact. Yet it is this very division between hypothesis and fact, between what God could have done and the recognition of what He has done, and between man’s virtual and actual capacity, that represents the critical node of the problem.

Herein lies the greatness, but also the ambiguity of baroque metaphysics, intended as the solution to the problem of the nexus between philosophy and theology. In order to safeguard the gratuitousness of grace, one has recourse to the concept of a pure nature; this purity, moreover, could be taken not only as a virtual, but also as an original structural condition (as indeed would soon happen in the course of modern thought). As a consequence, grace could be thought of as an accessory, and therefore not essential to an understanding of the structure and goal of nature. In other words, from being that which completes nature without taking anything away (*gratia non tollit, sed perficit naturam*), grace becomes that which is added to an already ‘complete’ nature.

Undoubtedly, in Suárez’s theological design, this new ‘baroque’ order certainly did not aim to weaken, but rather to emphasise divine revelation; furthermore, it was not limited to presenting divine revelation as the moment of completion of the pre-Christian natural order, but included and assimilated within it the natural foundation itself of theology. In short, the theory of pure nature, on a par with the neutral concept of ‘being as such’, was, for Suárez, the utterly ‘natural’ proof of God’s glory. The Jesuit motto *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* meant for him that revelation was called upon to see itself as the ontological structure of the natural world. And just as God’s infinite, sovereign, and eminent character can manifest itself only in His being a ‘being’, as an addition or contraction of a universal ontological order, so grace is supernatural because it

44 Cf. *ibid.*, prol.4.1.21 (ed. Vivès, vol. 7, p. 185).

is added to a nature that is almost absolute in its purity. It is obvious that both being and nature are *created* by God, but already here, in Suárez's writing, they begin to be thought of paradoxically, as if God did not exist—*etsi Deus non daretur*.

(English translation by Lisa Adams)